

Remarks

The specification has been amended to change the title and recite that the instant application is a continuation of U.S. Serial No. 09/536,728, filed March 28, 2000, which is a division of prior application U.S. Serial No. 09/227,944, filed January 11, 1999, which is a continuation under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b) of prior application U.S. Serial No. 08/913,900, filed February 26, 1998, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 371, claiming benefit, under 35 U.S.C. § 120, from PCT/EP96/01568. Entry of this amendment will cause the specification to properly recite the lineage of the application.

Claims 1 to 25 Have Previously Been Allowed in the Parent Application

Instant claims 1 to 25 correspond to allowed claims 25, 27 to 29, 34 to 38, 51 to 54, 66 to 69, and 82 to 89, respectively, of U.S. Serial No. 09/536,728 (the parent application), which is currently on appeal. The instant claims 1 to 25 had been allowed during prosecution of U.S. Serial No. 09/536,728 and are herewith presented to obtain a patent to the allowed claims while the appeal of U.S. Serial No. 09/536,728 is pending (accordingly, claims 25, 27 to 29, 34 to 38, 51 to 54, 66 to 69, and 82 to 89 of U.S. Serial No. 09/536,728 have been cancelled).

Instant claims 1 to 25, in being allowed, have been determined to be patentably distinct from the rejected claims still pending in U.S. Serial No. 09/536,728, and therefore no double patenting issue over U.S. Serial No. 09/536,728 is involved.

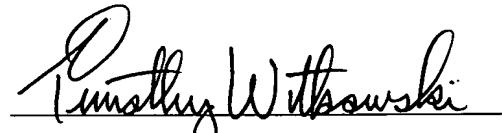
Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims are allowable and therefore solicit a Notice of Allowance for all of the pending claims.

Information Disclosure Statement

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.56, 1.97, and 1.98, the Examiner's attention is directed to the references listed in the accompanying Forms 1449A/PTO and 1449B/PTO. It is requested that the above-described information be considered pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b). All of the references listed on the accompanying Forms 1449A/PTO and 1449B/PTO were cited by either the Examiner or the applicants in the file of the parent application, U.S. Serial No. 09/536,728; grandparent application, U.S. Serial No. 09/227,944; or the great-grandparent application, U.S. Serial No. 08/913,900, each which is relied upon for an earlier filing date under 35 U.S.C. § 120.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone interview would be helpful in advancing prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the attorney below.

Respectfully submitted,



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